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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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- *Interview with Governor Tim Kaine, who comments on the importance of caregivers*



- *Governor Tim Kaine comments on the role volunteers play in Virginia*

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Caring people from Richmond/Tri-Cities areas receive Governors awards

Awards presented to volunteers and caregivers

Richmond, Va. — Several residents from the Richmond/Tri-Cities region have received special honors from the Governor.

The following are recipients of the 2008 **Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards**:

- **Kaitlin Gastrock, Mechanicsville:** Youth Volunteer Award. Gastrock, a junior at Atlee High School, tutors children who struggle with reading in her community.
- **The Long Family, Mechanicsville:** Family Award. The Long family is recognized for helping to establish the Eastern Hanover Volunteer Fire Company. Three generations of this family have contributed hundreds of hours annually to fundraising, training and responding to fire emergencies.
- **Petersburg Foster Grandparents, Inc., Petersburg:** National Service Program Award. The program mentors children in public schools, child care facilities, juvenile detention centers and homeless shelters.
- **Dr. Hilda M. Woodby, Richmond:** Volunteer Award. Dr. Woodby spearheaded the funding and opening of Family Advocacy Clinics, Inc., where she provides low-cost psychotherapy services to members of families experiencing family violence.

These awards highlight the efforts of outstanding citizens of the Commonwealth who seek to enhance the lives of others in their communities. The awards are presented to groups, individuals and families whose efforts exemplify extraordinary volunteer service.

"I congratulate the winning volunteers who help us move Virginia forward and improve the quality of life for all Virginians," said Governor Timothy Kaine. "When we serve our community as volunteers, our unique skills, perspectives and experience make us a stronger Commonwealth."

The following were recently presented with the **Governor's Caregiver Recognition Award**:

- **Charles Anderson of Richmond**, caregiver of his ill son for more than 40 years;
- **Brett Leake of Maidens (Louisa)**, caregiver to his father, diagnosed with muscular dystrophy and renal cell carcinoma, despite a holding down a fulltime job as an entertainer and his medical challenges, including muscular dystrophy;
- **Venida Shields of Church Road (Dinwiddie)**, caregiver for her mother-in-law, a breast cancer patient

These caregivers are part of a growing trend across the country and the Commonwealth. Last year, Virginia ranked 12th in the nation in the number of family caregivers, with a total of nearly 700,000 people caring for relatives.

“The Caregiver Award symbolically thanks all of the caregivers in the Commonwealth who lovingly take care of family and friends day after day. Although the award is only given to a few caregivers, it serves as a reminder of the tremendous contributions all caregivers within Virginia make,” said Governor Kaine.

Both awards were recently presented April 23 and 24 at the annual Conference on Volunteerism and Community Service in Virginia Beach, sponsored in part by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/community/council_women/caregiver.html

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/as/caregiver.html>

<http://www.vaservice.org/>

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Editor's note: Interviews and photos available upon request.